

## **Rights Action**

### **Honduras Coup Alert #22**

Photo-essay, July 11 march for Isis Oved Murillo, young man killed by Honduran Armed Forces on July 5

Article: "Honduras: Are we going to make concessions to those who perpetrate coups?", by Dana Frank

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### **JULY 11, 2009 – MARCH IN HONOUR OF ISIS OVED MURILLO**

Thousands of pro-democracy Honduran again took to the streets today, marching to the spot by the airport where Isis Oved Murillo was shot down by Honduran soldiers when they opened fire, July 5, with hundreds of rounds, against some of the 100,000+ Hondurans who had come to greet the returning President Zelaya.

On July 11, 2009, thousands marched to and gathered at the spot where Isis was killed.

Two of Isis' sisters, Rebeca and Gedalia, came from Olancho, in eastern Honduras, to participate in the march. They spoke with the press and then stood on the stage with Honduran First Lady Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, and spoke to the crowd, demanding justice for the killing of their brother, telling the thousands that though their family was devastated by his death, that what Isis, and their whole family, were fighting for was not in vain - the return of President Zelaya and his whole government and justice to be done against the coup plotters and perpetrators.

On Sunday morning, July 12, thousands will march to the Central Park of Tegucigalpa, by the Cathedral presided over by Catholic Cardenal Oscar Andres Rodriguez who, along with 11 bishops, have justified the military coup and are supporting the military-coup regime.

In this catholic country, many Hondurans have been more shocked and upset by the pro-coup position of the Catholic Church hierarchy, than by the complicity of the other main pro-coup sectors – economic elites, military, congress, media.

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(The article below is a clear and obvious reminder why we must continue to work in Canada and the United States so that our governments take concrete economic and legal actions – including cutting off all military relations, assistance, aid, etc – so as to ensure the return of President Zelaya and his entire government, and legal trials against the coup plotters and perpetrators.)

### **HONDURAS: ARE WE GOING TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO THOSE WHO PERPETRATE COUPS?**

July 9, 2009, By Dana Frank, Professor of History, University of California, Santa Cruz

Now that legitimate President Zelaya of Honduras is sequestered in "negotiations" in Costa Rica with the very man, Roberto Micheletti, who ordered his kidnapping and removal from the country at the point of a gun, we can ask: what does it mean to "negotiate" with the perpetrators of a coup?

The President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, is supposed to be mediating some kind of compromise. Is Zelaya himself, the legitimately elected President expected to compromise? Is Micheletti somehow Zelaya's equal here? What, is up for negotiation?

Although many on the far right are crying out that Zelaya was himself trying to subvert the Honduran constitution--which he wasn't--it is clear that Micheletti and his oligarchs could have followed a legal procedure had that been the case. The Honduran constitution allows for impeachment as well as a precise legal structure in which an official can be officially charged and allowed to defend him.

Micheletti and General Romeo Vasquez, by contrast, with the support of the Supreme Court and most of Congress, completely subverted the rule of law and occupied the country militarily.

Since U.S. Secretary of State announced Wednesday that Arias would mediate a potential solution, Honduran trade unionists, human rights groups, and scholars have expressed alarm about the very concept of negotiating with those who perpetrate coups.

We can join them in underscoring the danger of making concessions to those who launched, supported, and carried out a military coup, and the potential for setting a dangerous precedent in doing so.

As German Zepeda, President of the Coalition of Honduran Banana and Agroindustrial Unions, noted on Wednesday, "Does this mean that in any country in the region, you can launch a coup d'etat and you'll be rewarded with negotiation?" As he points out, the U.S. initiative in setting up mediation "could convert itself into the norm for future politics in the region."

Leticia Salomon, a prominent Honduran sociologist and economist, in an extended analysis released on July 3, underscores the key elements necessary in any solution to the conflict: not only the restitution of President Zelaya to office, but a removal from responsibilities of all those that violated the law in supporting the coup--including the highly politicized judges of the Supreme Court, the military, and those in Congress who voted to support the bogus presidency of Micheletti, and who falsified documents in which Zelaya supposedly renounced his office.

"Human Rights Are Not Negotiable," declared the Center for Investigation and Promotion of Human Rights (CIPRODEH) of Honduras --an independent civil society group, not to be confused with the pro-coup human rights office of Micheletti's false government.

In a letter released on Wednesday, July 8, they note that we cannot accept impunity for those who have violated human rights all over Honduras in the past ten days, through kidnapping, torture, illegal detentions, repression of demonstrations, and murder.

They specify a set of minimal demands which begin with the immediate demilitarization of the country. Many outside Honduras are not aware that from the moment the coup began, the army occupied all government facilities throughout the country.

Police forces have been subsumed under military control. Civil liberties, including the right to freedom of expression and travel and against home searches, have been suspended.

Second, they demand an end to the use of chemical and lethal weapons to repress demonstrations, and the removal of the Armed Forces from responsibility for managing public demonstrations. They also call for the return to civil control of all public services, electric power, telecommunications, hospitals, and other bodies, which are currently being controlled by the military.

Given the involvement of so many key political actors in the coup, the situation is extremely difficult. In imagining a solution, it's nonetheless essential to eschew a scenario in which concessions are made to those who perpetrated the coup, in some kind of "compromise" in which the generals, justices, and members of Congress who perpetrated this are allowed to continue in office. As Salomon underscores, it will be necessary to draw on judges from outside the country to bring justice to the situation.

Nor should the coup lead to concessions to U.S. power. When Jean Bertrand Aristide, president of Haiti, was overthrown in a 1994 coup in Haiti, the U.S. flew him back on a plane and restored him to power; but with a price: that Aristide support the policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which notoriously led to even worse poverty and a second coup.

In Honduras today, Greg Grandin cautions in *The Nation*, "Washington should follow the lead of the rest of the Americas and resist the temptation to attach conditions to its support for his return to office."

Any solution to the coup must take into account the very conditions that led to it; not just the now-famous mass poverty in Honduras, but the lockdown on the political process by the two ruling parties and a handful of oligarchs who have run Honduras for decades, with armed support from the U.S. government at Soto Cano (Palmerola) Air Force Base.

In the U.S., we hear a lot about "no concessions to terrorists."

As we move forward in what we hope is a new political era, we need to beware of concessions as well to those who perpetrate coups--especially in Latin America, where democracy is, alas, still fragile, and the U.S. still needs to prove that it is unequivocally opposed to military coups and will not use them to its strategic advantage.

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**AMERICANS AND CANADIANS SHOULD CONTACT YOUR OWN MEDIA, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, SENATORS & MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, TO DEMAND:**

- unequivocal denunciation of the military coup
- no recognition of this military coup and the 'de facto' government of Roberto Michelletti
- the unconditional return of the entire constitutional government
- increasing economic, military and diplomatic sanctions against the coup regime
- respect for safety and human rights of all Hondurans
- the application of international and national justice against the coup plotters, and
- reparations for the illegal actions and rights violations committed during this illegal coup

**FUNDS ARE NEEDED FOR THE 'PRO-DEMOCRACY', EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN HONDURAS:**

Rights Action staff in Honduras are providing emergency relief funds, every day, to community development, campesino, indigenous and human rights organizations for: food and shelter, transportation and communication, urgent action outreach and human rights accompaniment work. Make tax deductible donations to Rights Action and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

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